



**Testimony by Ron McLellan, President
Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511
House Bill 6335 and Senate Bill 800**

Good afternoon Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

My name is Ron McLellan. I am the President of Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511, representing approximately 4500 state workers in the NP-2 Maintenance and Service Bargaining Unit.

I am testifying today in opposition to House Bill 6335 regarding the UConn Health Center. This bill will not serve the public interest, will adversely affect workers, and in the long term, may negatively impact the State of Connecticut. C.E.U.I. has a particular interest as it represents approximately 230 workers at the UConn Health Center who provide a variety of services including custodial, property control, skilled trades, animal care, and grounds maintenance.

The UConn Health Center was built to be a public hospital with a public mission. This bill will facilitate a takeover of the UConn Health Center by Hartford Hospital and put in jeopardy the public mission and its employees.

In August of 2008, the UConn Health Center released expression of interest documents from area hospitals as to a potential partnership. From the beginning, the seven unions of the UConn Health Center Labor Partnership had concerns. At every meeting with the Health Center administrators we stated clearly that we were willing to be part of a transparent process and help

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in any way possible to secure the future and public mission of the Health Center. Through the entire process we were offered only concepts with very few real details. In the past few days some details have emerged and it seems that what started as a *partnership has morphed into a takeover* of the UConn Health Center by the proposed Hartford Health Care group.

Even though there have been assurances that the employees at UCHC will remain state employees we are very concerned about the governance structure. The information provided to us clearly shows that any decisions as to the future of our members is in the hands of the Hartford Health Care group. In addition, we will be required to separate our UCHC members from the NP-2 unit contract and negotiate a separate contract for non economic and benefit issues.

Even more important are the people of Connecticut whom the UConn Health Center has served for over 30 years. We must insure that health care in the greater Hartford area is not negatively impacted by eliminating the only public medical center in the state. We feel that there are better ways to move forward the mission of partnering with area hospitals and creating a world class medical center that remains public.

In addition I want to urge support of Senate Bill 800, An Act Concerning the Fringe Benefit Differential for Employees of John Dempsey Hospital at the University of Connecticut Health Center.

Thank you.

Ron McLellan